Max & El by batyalewbel

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)
Genre: Also Nancy Wheeler is perfect and she would be really sweet with Eleven, Friendship, Gen, I hate Billy and I wish Max and El were friends
Language: English
Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Max (Stranger Things)
Relationships: Eleven & Max (Stranger Things)
Status: Completed
Published: 2017-11-07
Updated: 2017-11-07
Packaged: 2022-04-02 14:41:33
Rating: Teen And Up Audiences
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 1
Words: 1,250
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

What if El one time stepped in and protected Max from her shitty brother?

Max & El

Author's Note:

> My friend suggested this and I haven't been able to shake the thought. Especially because damn there is no reason they can't be friends!!
>
> Also I didn't grammar check this before posting so like...sorry

It was Nancy who first pointed it out to El.

(Technically her name is Jane now, but Mike still calls her El and it feels strangely right to have two names)

One day Nancy came into the basement while they were all there. And Lucas had brought Max over too.

El was still cold around Max, although she hadn't bothered to think about why. Their only interaction was a brief, chilly hello.

As the others were beginning to leave Nancy said, "Hey El, can I talk to you for a second?"

She sent a pointed look at Mike that made him groan, but also get up and leave the room.

El wondered if Nancy secretly also had powers.

And the older girl sat next to El on their sofa, hands folded neatly in her lap. Everything about Nancy was always very neat and precise… And pretty.

"El, why don't you like Max?" Nancy asked and El looked up at her in surprise. Was she so obvious? How could Nancy tell?

The *why* was the most troubling part of her question. Because truly El didn't know.

She had realized very quickly that her initial jealousy of Max was

stupid. Mike didn't like Max that way, he said he didn't, and he acted like he didn't.

And friends don't lie, so she knew she could take him at his word.

But maybe she was still jealous of Max… Just for other things.

For her pretty red hair that was so graceful compared to El's unruly dark curls. Or maybe she was jealous of the time Max got to spend with her friends that she missed.

(She was not angry at Hopper anymore, but there was still a seed of bitterness towards him too. For that year alone in the cabin and for raised voices and cruel words.)

Nancy still sat beside her, patiently waiting while El puzzled over the question and how to answer it.

After all this time, it was still hard for El to talk sometimes.

"Jealous," she finally mumbled.

"Jealous? Why are you jealous?" Nancy asked sounding so kind. She knew that Mike thought his sister was very annoying sometimes but El loved her for exactly this. Her kindness.

It reminded her of Will's mother in a way. That warm openness.

As to why she was jealous, El wasn't sure she could explain it all in words. She just shrugged and Nancy sighed, leaning back in her seat.

"Well, I know it can be pretty hard with new people but… Max is cool. I think you would really like her if you got to know her."

And El frowns up at Nancy, *are you serious?* She thinks and Nancy must read it on her face because she just laughs and pulls herself up off the couch.

"Seriously El, give her a shot and you might be surprised."

And with that Nancy was gone, leaving El to consider what she had said.

El decided she would try.

She knew what time school got out even if she wasn't in it. Jim said she would start next year.

Now she was at least allowed to leave the cabin as long as she called the precinct first and asked permission.

(The answer was almost always *yes* now, but Jim said it was important to ask)

(He also said she could call him dad if she wanted to. She wasn't quite ready yet, but she was thinking she might be soon)

So she called and asked for permission to see one of Mike's friends. The answer was yes and off she went.

She didn't technically know Max's address, but she found the house easily enough, although the walk was longer than she expected.

(Jim also said he was going to get her a bike soon, that he or the boys could teach her to ride it)

When she arrived at the door she knew belonged to Max's house, the first thing she heard were voices raised. A boy around Jonathan or Steve's age and Max.

There was something in Max's tone that she didn't like. Something that put her hackles up.

It was easy to unlock the door, although she pushed it open with her hands because that was quieter.

Inside the house was empty. A television was on, but silent and the voices were coming from upstairs. She crept up the stairs one by one, not afraid of being caught, but wanting to avoid detection.

As she reached the top of the steps she could make out words.

"*I told you to listen to me Max."*

"*And I told you to leave me alone."*

One voice big and booming. A threat. The other voice smaller… Scared.

El stormed down the hall and turned the corner to find Max and a Steve Harrington sized boy looming over her, one hand fisted in her pretty red hair.

His back was to El, but Max could see her just fine. Her eyes widened, her mouth moved in the shape of El's name but she didn't speak it aloud.

The boy turned around anyway, yanking Max by her hair and the girl cried out, her hands reaching up to try and make him let go.

"And is this another of your weird little friends?" he asked with a smile that looked plastic. El knew what it looked like when people lied all too well, even if they lied without words.

"Let go," she said glaring up at the boy whose grin only widened and his grip on Max's hair tightened.

"How about instead, you leave before I throw you down the stairs?" he asked with that manic grin that reminded her of cold facilities and doctors who said over and over again they were doing this for *her own good.*

First, she forced his hand open. If she broke a finger in the process, she didn't much care.

"*What the fuck!"* he cried out as El gently nudged Max back a few steps without ever touching her. She took a step into the room, a step towards the boy and although he towered over her, she knew she could bring him down to eye level in seconds if she wanted.

"Leave Max alone," she said and the boy's eyes widened as he cradled his hand to his chest.

She thought of something she had heard that Steve Harrington say with Dustin. It had been a joke but she liked the sound of it as she glared up at the boy.

“Or your ass is grass.”

And just like that the boy fled, leaving just Eleven and Max.

“El… That was so *cool,”* she breathed and Eleven shrugged.

She wasn’t so good with this part. How to make friends in a way that wasn’t strange. She knew now that how she befriended the boys was strange. That normal people didn’t become friends by finding each other in rainy forests and scaring bullies into submission.

Normal friends said hello, and hugged each other.

“Hello,” she said and she wrapped her arms around Max, “I want to be friends.”

And Max laughed sounding incredulous as she returned El’s hug with strong arms.

“Me too, El.”

And that’s how Max and El finally became friends.

The boys were puzzled at the next gathering when they sat next to each other and smiled.

Puzzled, but pleased. Nobody wants people within the party to be enemies.

(When Nancy spotted them together a week later, she grinned and gave El a thumbs up)

Author's Note:

> SERIOUSLY WHY AREN'T MAX AND EL FRIENDS SEASON 3 HAD BETTER FIX THIS.
> Also I like to think that post season 2 Eleven gets to spend time with all the gang which means she totally gets to spend a little time with soccer mom Steve Harrington and lord knows what she makes of that.
> And like...El coulda REALLY kicked Billy's ass but...she was there to kick ass AND make friends and

she broke at least one or two of his fingers so like... good enough I think.